



ToughTimes

EMAIL | TOUGHTIMESTABLOID@GMAIL.COM

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Cash-poor excluded from the Senate

BY PAULA DeCOITO

Wanted: Applicants for the Canadian Senate. Must have at least \$4,000 in "real property" and a "net worth" of at least \$4,000.

This is not a joke. This is what is on the government of Canada's official application form for potential members of the Canadian Senate. It is blatant discrimination against Canadians who do not own property and who do not have \$4,000.

The job of senator pays \$142,000 a year plus benefits, plus a pension at the end of the term.

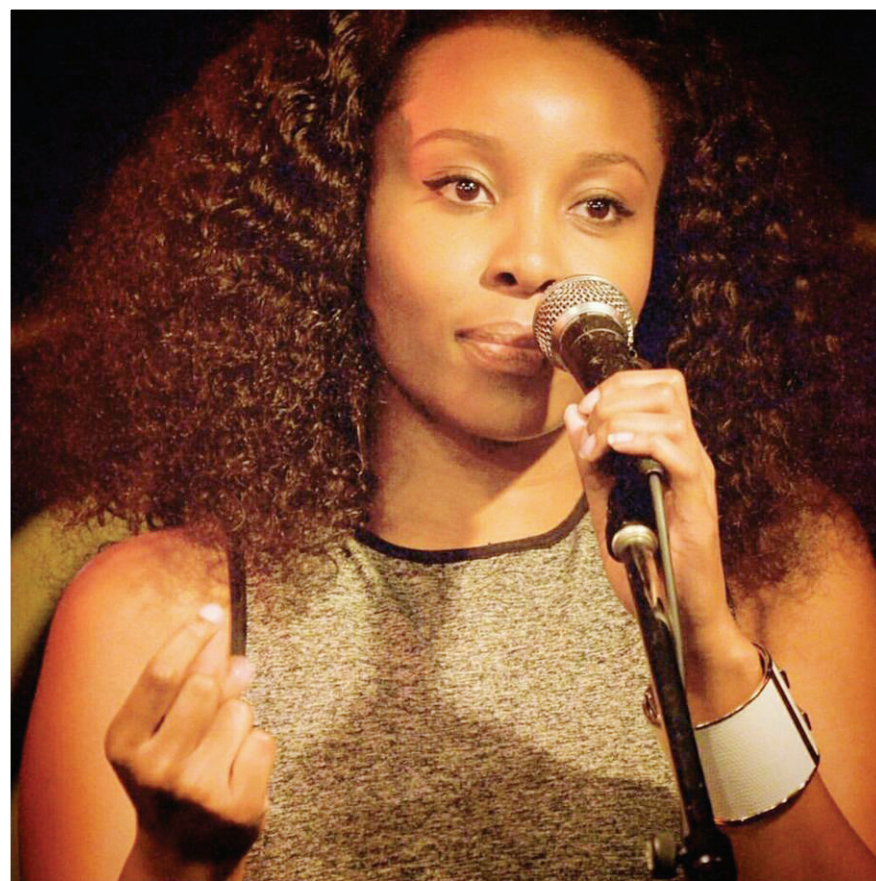
I am Chair of the Peel Poverty Action Group. Once a month, I meet with Canadians who live on low incomes, who live and "work" on the streets, who live in their cars, who go to soup kitchens for their meals and to foodbanks for their groceries -- citizens who are disenfranchised through the values and practices of our economic system, a system founded on the fear of scarcity and an obsession with accumulation of private property and private profit.

Time and time again, the members of PPAG come to our meetings and share their stories of how they are being poorly treated by the government workers who handle their welfare payments, by the landlords who torment them when they are only a few days late with their rent, by schools that focus on the poverty and not the potential of their children. I listen to them. I work with them. I express my solidarity with them. We are champions for social change for social justice -- for all.

At our meetings, we look into each other's eyes and hearts and commit ourselves to building the just society, a society founded on the values of diversity, equality, freedom and justice for all. We dedicate ourselves to working for social change to create a society without poverty and other forms of oppression, a society that values and protects the physical environment, a society that supports the material and spiritual development of the human individual in a way that respects the lives and interests of our non-human brothers and sisters with whom we share this beautiful blue planet, Earth.

The men and women who come to our PPAG meetings have much to give to our Canadian society. They are intelligent, caring and capable human beings. They are Canadians. They have the right to be treated fairly by their government. They are Canadians who are being denied the opportunity by their elected national government to apply for the position of Canadian Senator, because they do not have "\$4,000 in real property" and a "net worth of \$4,000."

Paula DeCoito has just retired as executive director of the Social Planning Council of Peel, a job she has held for 25 years. She will remain active in Peel's social services scene as chair of Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG).



Malton's own Britney Davis has won a CBC contest to have her song used as Toronto's anthem. In addition to fame, she gets \$10k and CBC will make a video of the song. Britney, 21, is a graduate of Lincoln M. Alexander Secondary School, composes and performs her own songs, plays alto saxophone and bass guitar. She says she wanted to "include everybody in the city" in her song "From the Six".
(Photo supplied)

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Did You Know?

PEEL POVERTY ACTION GROUP

Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG) is open to every individual and organization in Peel Region that cares about what poverty does to people.

It provides a safe place where people who are cash-poor and those who try to help them are encouraged to speak out - and Tough Times is part of that safe place.

The Group's mandate is to advocate for people in need and to educate the public about poverty issues.

Membership is free. PPAG meets at 9:30 a.m. the second Thursday of every month (except July and August) alternately

in Mississauga at the Newcomer Centre of Peel, 160 Dundas Street West, at Confederation Parkway;

in Brampton at the John Howard Society, 134 Main Street North, just south of Church Street.

2016 meetings

Brampton: May 12; Sept. 8; Nov. 10.
Mississauga: April 14; June 9; Oct. 13;
Dec. 8. (*subject to change*) | ppag.wordpress.com

Homeless: The Video

Spaces and Places: Uncovering Homelessness in the Region of Peel is a 15-minute video in which homeless people describe their experiences.

A team from PPAG including a once-homeless person, will show the video to a group on request. There is no charge.

To book a showing contact ppagactiongroup@gmail.com. Allow about 45 minutes for the video and discussion.

The video was made by a team from York University, in cooperation with the Social Planning Council of Peel, financed by a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Download at:
<http://ppag.wordpress.com/spaces-and-places-video/>



Down-Turn Abbey

Work Out

Two guys from the Black community, eating at Knights Table because they are out of work.

Says one: "I passed the probationary period. Worked there for a year. Then one day, they said they had extra work for me to do. Took me to the office I thought to tell me about the extra duties. But I was fired. No warning, nothing. And Security escorted me off the property. I had always done my job. Only two of us were Black. I asked Why me? But there was no real answer. Workers were checked for drugs maybe once a year. I was checked three times. I've never done drugs. But I am always happy and smiling. Maybe they thought I shouldn't be happy at work."

The other guy says he was assistant manager at a branch of one of the big five banks. He left to visit his homeland but on his return, no jobs available. He has been looking for work for three years.

Letter to the Editor

Note to readers: OW is Ontario Works, providing income and health benefits, and help in getting a job; OSAP is the Ontario Student Assistance Program, a mix of grants and loans for students, improved by Ontario's 2016 Budget announced after this letter was received.

Dear Editor,

This is a letter to my social worker. Do other people have the same problem?

Dear Social Worker,

I just looked at my paystub from OW. It says that I am entitled to \$951 per month. They are deducting \$820 because of OSAP living allowance.

So, OW is only giving me \$131 per month (less \$47 for an outstanding balance leaving about \$89 to be deposited into my account). I am entitled to \$391 monthly child support (I assigned it to OW because the guy wasn't paying).

My question is this. If OW is getting my \$391 child support and only giving me \$131 a month, where is the other \$260 per month from my child support going?

Shouldn't I be receiving this money? I'm not sure that I understand the OW process but I would like to know where the extra money goes.

Please explain this to me.

OUT!

It's a social housing building. There's a rec room but it's kept locked when not required by a resident. So there's nowhere for the kids to play except the corridors and the entrance hall.

Or a quick trot across the street to the mall, where an influx of energetic young penniless people tends to make mall businesses grumpy. Tsk, tsk.

So the corridors and entrances of the apartment building are it. Noise, noise, noise. Rattle, rattle, rattle.

The building's staff appear: "Playing in the entrance hall and corridors is not permitted. If it keeps on happening after you have been told, you will get a letter from management. If you get a second letter, you could be evicted."

Should you have to choose between a roof over your head or happy kids?

This social housing building doesn't use the rec room for activities for children. Some buildings do, with help with homework, arts, song and dance.

ToughTimes

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Tough Times distributes 10,000 copies, throughout Peel Region.

Target audience is people experiencing homelessness, using food banks and soup kitchens, people who are struggling, plus faith groups, social service agencies, trades unions, business people, and the general public.

To advertise in Tough Times:

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Advertising rates: (colour included)

Business card: \$90

1/16 page: \$100

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3/4 page: \$600

Full page: \$755

A full page is approximately 10 inches wide by 12 inches deep = 120 square inches. E&OE

Injured workers fight back

STAY SAFE AT WORK ... OR LIVE IN PAIN AND POVERTY

BY CATHERINE FENECH

Peel Injured Workers is a new group in Peel Region that provides peer support to injured workers – how to deal with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) for instance, other issues affecting injured workers, as well as referral services. The group advocates for injured workers in Peel Region, working closely with community groups and agencies including labour, to advance the interests of people injured through work.

Peel Injured Workers is affiliated with the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups (ONIWG). Founded in 1991, ONIWG is the voice of injured workers in Ontario with member groups across the province.

ONIWG's mandate is to help injured workers and their families obtain fair and just compensation, rehabilitation and re-employment; a system which respects their rights to dignity, equality, health and safety.

ONIWG routinely meets with senior levels of government, including the Minister of Labour and the Premier's Office, and with senior management at the WSIB.

ONIWG has partnered with researchers to provide evidence of what is happening to injured workers. It has intervened on several cases before the Supreme Court of Canada to address issues that could negatively impact Ontario injured workers.

Working with the Ontario Federation of Labour, legal clinics and a group of doctors, ONIWG recently submitted a complaint to the Ontario Ombudsman alleging that the WSIB is ignoring medical advice.

It publishes a quarterly newspaper, Justice for Injured Workers.

ONIWG is run by a democratically-elected volunteer board of directors, all of whom are injured workers. ONIWG receives no government funding, having been defunded by the Mike Harris government, after refusing to be silenced in order to continue to receive funding. ONIWG relies on donations from labour and others to continue their work. Most of their work is done at the personal expense of their executive who themselves are facing poverty due to their own workplace injuries/illnesses.

Poverty is a real issue facing injured workers. Many are no longer able to work and receive little to no benefits from the WSIB. Many lose their homes, and families break up due to the financial strain. A 2007 Street Health survey in Toronto found that of people living on the streets in Toronto who previ-

ously had jobs, 57% were injured workers.

In 2010, ONIWG commissioned an "Injured Worker and Poverty Survey". Among the key findings:

- Before injury, 89% of respondents were employed full time; after injury 9%
- Nearly one in five lost their homes after injury
- Nearly one quarter had moved in with family or friends at some point after their injuries
- One in five injured workers could no longer afford a car
- Food bank use rose after work injury
- Over half had not been able to afford medications in the past 12 months
- Of these respondents, 88% also reported that they had used their medications less often than they were supposed to because of the cost
- 57% of injured workers in the study were unemployed

The current austerity agenda at the WSIB has made things even worse since 2010. In a recent financial statement, the WSIB bragged about removing almost \$7 billion from the unfunded liability from 2011 to early 2015. The unfunded liability is the difference between the money the WSIB has on hand now and what it will need to cover future claims. The WSIB, which is entirely funded by employers, did this while freezing employer premiums for three years straight.

So it is clear that the cuts have been made off the backs of injured workers. As more claims are being denied or limited, injured workers are forced onto taxpayer-funded social assistance instead of employer-funded compensation.

Employers are still protected from being sued but they aren't footing the real cost of workplace injuries/illnesses. The WSIB is even promising to return \$2 billion annually to employers once the unfunded liability is gone, while injured workers languish in poverty.

Historically, injured workers gave up their right to sue in return for a system of fair and just compensation. That system was to be funded entirely by employers so that injured workers would not become a burden on their families and society. But that is exactly what is happening. When workers are denied entitlement, they are also shut out of the rights to health care support, workplace accommodation and rehabilitation. Decisions on compensation can have a major impact upon the quality of life and dignity of an injured worker.

Catherine Fenech is president of Peel Injured Workers and secretary of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups

To reach Peel Injured Workers phone 905 790-8198

June 1 is Injured Workers Day every year – Wednesday in 2016



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ToughTimes

serving the Muslim community in Peel

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! Ending Islamophobia

BY FARHEEN KHAN

Newspapers and TV carry reports of Muslims engaging in extremist behaviour locally or abroad, reports that have the effect of demonizing all Muslims. Little effort is made to create or share positive images and stories about Muslims. Stereotypes of Muslims as “angry, violent” individuals are perpetuated, similarly to labels applied, for instance, to the Black and First Nations indigenous communities.

Islamophobia emerged shortly after September 11, 2001, otherwise known as 9/11, when four aircraft were hijacked by Muslim extremists, two were deliberately crashed into the World Trade Centre, another into the Pentagon, and a fourth crashed into a field when passengers tried to wrest control. I thought Islamophobia would dwindle over time, but it has become worse.

Having run in the 2015 federal election as the only hijab-wearing candidate, I spent hours knocking on doors and connecting with Mississauga residents. For the most part people were supportive and compassionate. No Islamophobic comments were made. When the major news channels realized that people were treating me the same as any other candidate, no stories made print or TV or radio. Unfortunately, Harper’s divisive politics sowed the seeds of hatred.

Though we have a new government and a new Prime Minister, those seeds are starting to bloom – particularly since Donald Trump shared his extremist views, suggesting banning all Muslims from the United States and having them wear ID bands.

The rise of Islamophobia has brought us closer to levels that are approaching what we first saw post-9/11, when many individuals like myself became victims of Islamophobia. Women are most affected by violence towards Muslims -- as a pay-back for the actions of a few extremists in other parts of the world.

I have always questioned how people feel that it’s justifiable to assault a woman simply for wearing a hijab, identifying as practicing a faith that happens to be misused and misrepresented by extremists.

It’s time for law-abiding Muslims to educate fellow citizens about Islam and Muslims, and what we truly stand for, so that we can eliminate Islamophobia.

Uniting Muslims and Allies for Humanity (UMAH) is a new organization committed to eliminating Islamophobia in our lifetime. Individuals who want to build bridges of understanding between communities and facilitate a dialogue on Islamophobia and the impact that it has on Muslims and the broader society are invited to join. Phone: (289) 632-9912



The Muslim journey in Peel

BY SHAILA KIBRIA CARTER

I’ve been educating people about Islam since I was six years old. I remember standing in front of my teacher, taking a deep breath, then explaining my religion, my faith, my practices just so she could understand why I was taking a day off for “Eid”, the Muslim holy day.

Now I have children of my own, some almost grown up. So for them, and for Muslim children in school who may be called on to explain Islam to other students and to their teachers, here is “Muslim 101 for Beginners”

1. The definition of “Muslim”: an Arabic word meaning “one who submits (to God)”.
2. The correct name for “Mosque” is “Masjid” – a place of worship for Muslims.
3. Muslims practice “Islam”, just as Christians practice Christianity.
4. There are different types of Muslims (Sunni, Shia, etc), just as there are different types of Christians (Catholic, Protestant, etc).
5. “Hijab” means “modesty” in Arabic.

6. “Ramadan” is the month of fasting, which many Muslims practice to remember those afflicted by poverty, and as a result, pay “zakat” or charity to the poor.

7. “Eid” means celebration in Arabic. Muslims celebrate two Eids. One of them to mark the end of Ramadan; the other to help the poor.

8. “Imam” or “Shaykh/Sheikh” is the leader, similar to a pastor or minister.

9. Juma is the day of prayer every Friday.

10. Allah is the Arabic word for God. Some may say “Khuda”, which is the Urdu or Bangla language.

Back in the 1960s, our fathers and mothers graduated from university and were ready to start their families. As they were establishing themselves as new immigrants in Canada, they realized that there were no masjids in Peel.

Basements of homes, recreation centres, and community halls were being rented or used to pray in, gather in and network in.

Along with places of worship, Saturday and Sunday Arabic schools were

popping up around the city. Being in an English-language school system, Muslim children were not learning the language of their religion: Arabic.

Parents worried that the traditions, culture and practices of the religion would die if their children did not learn how to practice Islam. Hence, along with other Muslim children, this became an integral part of my childhood. I learned math and English and all other subjects of the provincial curriculum at school during the weekdays, but while non-Muslim children were watching Saturday morning cartoons, my brother and I would join other Muslim children at the Islamic Forum of Canada to learn Islam from Shaykh Faisal Abdur-Razak and then drive to T.L. Kennedy Secondary School the next day to learn Arabic.

In the summers, my brother and I attended camp at The Islamic Centre in Mississauga. A school bus would take us to a day full of learning, fun, and really great experiences. I learned about the “hijab” there, or “modesty”, and how

Canadian Muslims can be modest, intelligent contributors to society.

Sheikh Abdullah Idris was our principal – the first time I met a Muslim who is not Brown, but Black. He taught me that Muslims are Black, Brown, White... and every race out there

According to Statistics Canada’s past reports, 9.4% of Peel’s population is Muslim. Now, in 2016, the population may be closer to 10%.

Full time Islamic schools have opened now, following Ontario’s curriculum, plus Arabic and Islam. And there are weekend activities for young people.

My children attend a youth group in Mississauga’s Sayeda Khadija Centre. In a climate where Muslims are being labelled “terrorists”, it is crucial to find safe places where my children can talk freely about issues, play basketball and just “hang” and “be” with other teenagers.

It’s a long time since I was six years old and teaching my teacher.

Shaila Kibria-Carter is a social activist in Peel’s Muslim community.

Sexual violence: It must stop

BY HARINDER MALHI

Sexual violence and harassment affect males and females of every age and culture and will not be tolerated in Ontario. Nearly 30% of Canadians say they have received unwelcome sexual advances while on the job. One in three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime; and it is estimated that almost 90% of sexual assaults are not even reported to the police.

Last year the government launched a \$41 million campaign *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*. This campaign recognizes that we all have a role to play in ending this kind of violence.

I was a member of the Select Committee on this issue, which heard from people across Ontario who had been impacted by sexual violence, as well as from front-line workers in healthcare and justice and social support.

The Committee was asked to make recommendations on improving prevention strategies and addressing barriers that prevent people from coming forward to report incidents. We made 68 recom-

mendations – to help change attitudes, improve supports for people who report abuse, and make workplaces, campuses, and homes, safer and more responsive to complaints. The Committee also recommended a province-wide strategy on human trafficking.

The Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) is improving its handling of sexual assault cases so that charges are handled fairly, effectively and consistently. A pilot program will provide free, independent legal advice to victims whose cases are proceeding toward a criminal trial, addressing issues such as the trauma of going through the justice system.

The government will work with the Law Society of Upper Canada and law schools to enhance training on acceptable conduct and rape-shield laws. Part of the Action Plan includes a proposal that would see Crown counsel and police trained in dealing with cases of sexual violence. MAG is increasing funding to sexual assault centres, providing \$14.8 million a year to 42 centres across Ontario.



Harinder Malhi

The province is considering Bill 132 which, if passed, will make workplaces, campuses and communities safer and provide more support for survivors of sexual violence. Some of the key points: raising public awareness; training and supports for front-line workers; improved response in the justice system; and enhanced supports for groups such as: LGBTQ, aboriginal communities and people with disabilities.

Colleges, universities, and private career colleges will be required to have a sexual violence policy to be reviewed

– with student involvement – every three years.

Earlier this year, I attended Sheridan College's Davis Campus to announce the government's efforts to strengthen laws to stop sexual violence on campuses.

Change needs to start with a dialogue in every community; every classroom; every workplace; and every home.

Harinder Malhi is the MPP for Brampton-Springdale

WHAT TO DO

- If you are in danger now, phone police at 911.
- Sexual assault centres offer help to survivors of recent or past sexual assault, sexual harassment or childhood sexual abuse. For the Sexual Assault Centre of Peel phone 905 792-0821 or 1-800 810-0180
- If you are a woman in crisis: 1-866-863-0511 (toll free) 1-866-863-7868 (TTY) 416-863-0511 (Toronto)
- If you are a male survivor of sexual abuse: 1-866-887-0015

Do you need someone speaking Punjabi, Hindi, Tamil or Urdu to help you? Phone Punjabi Community Health Services 905-677-0899

<p>pchs Serving Diverse Communities</p> <p>क्या आपको हिन्दी बोलने वाले व्यक्ति की मदद की ज़रूरत है? तो पंजाबी कम्युनिटी हेल्थ सर्विसेज़ (Punjabi Community Health Services) को 905-677-0889 पर फोन करें।</p>	<p>pchs Serving Diverse Communities</p> <p>ਕੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ? ਤਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਹੈਲਥ ਸਰਵਿਸਿਜ਼ (Punjabi Community Health Services) ਨੂੰ 905-677-0889 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।</p>	<p>pchs Serving Diverse Communities</p> <p>کیا آپ کو کسی ایسے شخص کی مدد کی ضرورت ہے جو پنجابی بولتا جانتا ہو؟ پنجابی کمیونٹی ہیلتھ سروسز کو فون کریں 905-677-0889</p>	<p>pchs Serving Diverse Communities</p> <p>உங்களுக்கு தமிழ் கதைக்க தெரிந்த ஒருவரின் உதவி வேண்டுமா? அழையுங்கள் 905 677 0889</p>
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If you are struggling to make ends meet, have to choose between paying rent or buying food, or have more bills than income... The Mississauga Food Bank is here to help you.

Anyone in need and living in Mississauga can use a neighbourhood food bank or other member agency regardless of age, sexual orientation, race, religion, gender or immigration status.

Visit www.themississaugafoodbank.org/getfood or phone 905.270.5589 to find a member agency near you.





ToughTimes

serving the Black community in Peel

You are sick? Go to jail

HEALTH FOR YOUNG BLACK MEN

BY NORMA NICHOLSON, RN, BA, MA (Ed)

The most effective method to decrease crime in any community is to prevent it. Crime prevention methods are effective, cost-saving measures that improve quality of life for all and contribute to the overall wellbeing of communities.

Canada's universal health care system is often understood as a central pillar of a national commitment to social equity and social justice. Such an understanding makes it difficult to raise the issue of racial inequalities within the context of the Canadian health-care system. However, data compiled by the Canadian Institute of Health Information reports that youth in custody are more likely than the general population to suffer undiagnosed and untreated mental illness, addiction, trauma and infectious diseases. Less than one percent of the general population suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, yet one in four youth in custody displays this disorder.

It is clearly documented and reported through evidence-based research that there is an overrepresentation of Black youth in custody when compared to white youth. The literature suggests that racism is a significant barrier to Black youth feeling a sense of social inclusion and belonging and that systemic racism is the core of the challenges that Black youth encounter. This impacts their wellbeing and leaves them psychologically vulnerable to low self-esteem, mental health and other challenging health issues. (Roots of Violence Report, 2008).



Norma Nicholson

FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES EACH DAY

"Racial profiling happens in the schools. The enrolment of African-Canadian children into vocational, commercial and technical schools; safe school legislation which lays blame on the individual student but ignores the structural and social issues as root causes, increases expulsion of Black students from the education system, and an astounding drop-out rate among racialized students. These students are literally fighting for their lives each day."

from an email to The Editor, accompanying this article.

Rather than looking for biological factors inherent in race that are responsible for racial inequities in health, some researchers have proposed that the problem of racism be seen as a primary factor in producing inequitable outcomes, regardless of socio-economic or educational status.

In Ontario, the Roy McMurtry Youth Centre, essentially a jail, was built to house 192 youth, ages 12 to 17. All other youth custody facilities in the

province house 20 to 24 young people. When a Toronto Star reporter visited on March 2, 2013, he reported seeing 60 young men attending a program in the gym. All but one were Black.

On admission, every young person undergoes a health care screening, and many health challenges are identified that should have been addressed in the community.

(Continued on p. 8)



Charmie Deller performed her original songs at Black History Month events. (Photo supplied)

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ToughTimes

serving the Black community in Peel

African revolutions and the fight for liberation

AN OVERVIEW THAT SPEAKS TO THE STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE OF AFRICAN PEOPLES DURING PERIODS OF OPPRESSION

BY SANKOFA

Nat Turner's Revolution

Nat Turner's rebellion, also called the Southampton Insurrection, is probably the most famous slave uprising in North America. The revolt was brilliantly planned by Turner and took place August 1831 in Southampton County, Virginia. The Turner-led group of "freedom fighters" killed up to 65 people of European descent, the highest number of fatalities caused by a slave uprising in the American South. Though the rebellion was quelled within a few days, Turner survived in hiding for more than two months.

Haitian Revolution

The most successful slave uprising in the Western Hemisphere was the Haitian Revolution, which began in 1791. Dutty Boukman, an educated slave from Jamaica who was sold to a French slave master in Haiti, organized and started the revolution that was eventually led by military mastermind Toussaint L'Ouverture. During the war, which culminated in the first independent black country in 1804, 100,000 French and British soldiers were killed.

The Zanj Revolt

The largest revolt by enslaved Africans was ignited by the Zanj against Arab slavers. The Zanj or Zinj lived along the coast of East Africa. They were traded as slaves by Arabs and made to work in the cruel and humid saltpans of Shatt-al-Arab, near Basra in modern-day Iraq. Conscious of their large numbers and oppressive working conditions, the Zanj rebelled three times.

The largest of these rebellions lasted from 868 to 883 A.D., during which they inflicted repeated defeat on Arab armies sent to suppress the revolt. For some 14 years, they continued to achieve remarkable military victories and even built their own capital - Moktara, the Elect City.

New York Slave Revolt of 1712

The New York Slave Revolt of 1712 was in New York City, when 23 enslaved Africans killed nine peo-



Sankofa is a poet, programmer, alternative educator and community activist. His name literally means - To back, To go forward. He is preoccupied with the notion of the statement - "Know Thy Self", spreading cultural and historical knowledge of the first peoples of civilization.

ple of European descent and injured six more. The slaves planned and organized the revolt on the night of April 6, 1712. After setting fire to a building on Maiden Lane near Broadway, they waited for colonists to rush to put out the flames, then attacked them.

The First Maroon War

In 1739, the Jamaican Maroons were the first enslaved Africans to win freedom from European slave masters. During the First Maroon War, they fought and escaped slavery and established free communities in the mountainous interior of Jamaica. For 76 years, there were periodic skirmishes between the British and the Maroons, alongside occasional slave revolts.

Eventually, the British government and slave holders realized they couldn't defeat the Maroons, so they came up with a peace treaty that allowed them to live in their own free states in Jamaica. As a result, the Maroons established their five main towns: Accompong, Trelawny Town, Moore Town, Scots Hall, and Nanny Town.

Anglo-Asante Wars (Ghana)

Nowhere in West Africa was there a longer tradi-

tion of confrontation between African and European powers than in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana), between the Asante Kingdom and the British. England's efforts to extend its economic and political influence into the interior of the Gold Coast were met with stiff resistance from the Asante.

For nearly 100 years (1806-1901), the Asante Kingdom defended its interests and freedom through a series of victories in battles with the British and other Europeans. The British finally defeated the Asante with superior weaponry and Nigerian warriors in Queen Mother Yaa Asantewaa's War of the Golden Stool in 1901.

This victory paved the way for British colonial rule over the entire Gold Coast, but the Queen Mother managed to keep the Golden Stool safe from the British.

The Amistad Revolt

In 1839, Africans took control of the Spanish slave boat La Amistad while sailing along the coast of Cuba. The African captives, led by Joseph Cinque, escaped their shackles and killed many of the crew, but spared a few to sail the ship back to their home in Sierra Leone. However, the crew tricked them, sailing north where they were apprehended near Long Island, New York. After a highly-publicized court trial, the African captives were released as free men.

The Malê Revolt

The Malê Revolt (1835), also known as The Great Revolt, is possibly the most significant slave rebellion in Brazil. Brazilian Yoruba slaves and ex-slaves, inspired by Dutty Boukman, Toussaint L'Ouverture, and the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), wore necklaces with the image of Haitian President Dessalines as they fought for their freedom. When the smoke cleared, the Portuguese authorities feared that they would lose control of Brazil, as the French did in Haiti, and they quickly sent the surviving 500 fighters of the revolt back to Africa.

Sankofa's notes on Black rebellions will continue in June 2016 issue of Tough Times.

ToughTomes

REFUGEE READINGS

As Syrian refugees are welcomed to Peel Region, many Peel residents are reaching out to help with food and clothing donations or sponsorship.

Libraries want to help, too. Your local library has books for adults and children in Arabic, plus resources in print, audio and on-line to help Arabic speakers learn English. Mississauga Library System runs free children's programs intended for the whole family, such as Welcome to Canada story-time, for learning new words and Canadian concepts, Conversation Circles for adults, employment workshops for newcomers, settlement workers are in the libraries and will connect customers to the social services they need.

Want to learn more? Here are books in Mississauga libraries that can help deepen our understanding of life as a refugee.

City of thorns: *Nine lives in the world's largest refugee camp* by Ben Rawlence

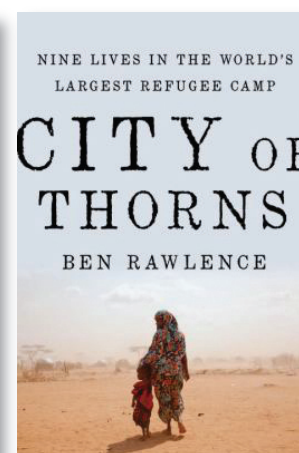
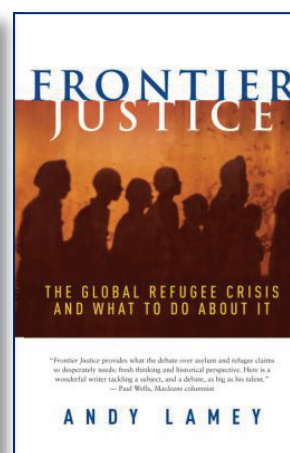
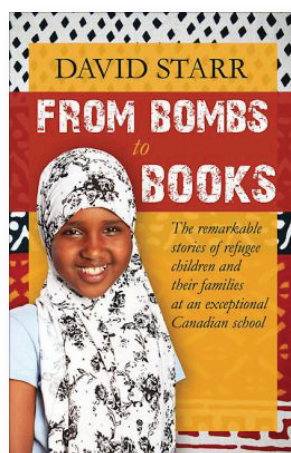
With deep compassion, Rawlence interweaves the stories of nine individuals to show what life is like in the camp and to sketch the wider political forces that keep the refugees trapped there.

From bombs to books: *The remarkable stories of refugee children and their families at an exceptional Canadian school* by David Starr

Starr shares the stories of his students and their parents, and tells about the teachers and others who dedicate themselves to making a difference in their lives. His students are hopeful and resilient despite the traumas they have faced.

Frontier Justice: *the global refugee crisis and what to do about it* by Andy Lamey

An examination of "temporary" refugee camps that are becoming a permanent feature of world crisis zones.



National Day of Mourning is a reminder that we all have a role to play in prevention.

LET'S ALL COMMIT TO ENDING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN MAKE THIS HAPPEN:

1. **First, contact your supervisor about the problem.** Your employer is not allowed to discipline you in any way for contacting your supervisor.
2. **Contact the Ministry of Labour** for guidance at 1-877-202-0008.
3. **Inform your workplace** health and safety committee.
4. **Contact your union** about your health and safety issues

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Budget 2016 earns a failing grade

BY DR. SIMON BLACK

Another provincial budget, another Liberal betrayal of Ontarians living on low incomes. Despite past promises, the 2016 budget does little to improve the lives and opportunities of cash-poor folks.

While the budget does include some concrete measures designed to make life more affordable for low and moderate-income Ontarians, this is an austerity budget.

While long overdue increases in the Ontario Child Benefit and the minimum wage, the roll out of full-day kindergarten, and introduction of Healthy Smiles Ontario providing dental care for kids in low-income families, have been important developments, the provincial Liberals have beat a hasty retreat in the War on Poverty.

Here is our report card on the government's performance -- the provincial Liberals are earning very bad grades.

F in Social Assistance

Close to 900,000 Ontarians rely on social assistance to help meet their basic needs. Since the Harris government cuts in 1995, welfare incomes have fallen far below the poverty line.

For folks on social assistance, Budget 2016 does bring some good news. The government has committed to ending the dollar-for-dollar claw back of child support from social assistance, although the amount of child support that single parents will be able to keep has not yet been determined. But no new money is coming for legal aid to help single parents obtain childcare support orders.

In social assistance, the budget includes a 1.5% increase for families on OW and for people with disabilities on ODSP, and a 3.7% increase to the rates for single individuals without children on OW—an extra \$25 a month. These increases will not kick in until September and October. And with inflation at around 2%, a 1.5% increase amounts to a cut in real income.

F in Child Care

According to the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Ontario tops the list of the highest and least affordable child care fees in Canada, with long wait lists for subsidy in many communities, including Peel.

Despite this, Budget 2016 offers no new money for child care and creates no new child care spaces. Subsidized child care can be a route out of poverty for many families, especially for single mothers on social assistance. Sadly, the Wynne Liberals are doing nothing.

D in Housing

With long waiting lists and a huge backlog in repairs, social housing is in crisis. Yet the budget offers no major new cash for social housing, simply repeating previous commitments.

An injection is planned of \$178 million over three years into the Liberal government's existing affordable-housing strategy. This will help those fleeing domestic violence (a \$2.4-million pilot) and homelessness outreach (\$45 million). Details are thin on where the remaining \$100 million will go, although the budget says it will support 1,500 new supportive housing units for those with disabilities and other needs.

No increase is planned in direct funding to low income people, especially folks on social assistance, to pay for housing-related expenses—like first and last month's rent, utilities arrears, furniture replacement.

F in Food Security

Rising food and housing costs are leaving many cash poor folks with the dire choice of paying the rent or putting food on the table. Across Canada, food costs are up 4% and vegetable prices up 18%. Food bank use is on the rise in Peel. The Daily Bread Foodbank estimates that the average food bank user, after paying for rent and utilities, has an income of only \$6.67 a day.

B in Post-Secondary Education

Changes to the post-secondary grants and loans system and education-related tax credits will mean that people with incomes under \$50,000 will receive more in non-repayable grants than they pay in tuition for most post-secondary programs. Students and/or parents will still have to pony up \$3000 to access these grants, but this appears to be one subject worthy of a decent grade.

However, the government is providing no new funding for post-secondary education overall which means that little will change for precarious part-time instructors who now do the bulk of undergraduate teaching in Ontario, some of them on poverty pay.

Overall grade: F

On poverty, the Wynne government's 2016 budget deserves a failing grade. Poverty in Ontario has increased 38% over the past 20 years. Nearly one in five of Ontario's children live in poverty. Close to seven million Canadian workers are paid within \$4 of the minimum wage. Ontario families pay up to \$19,000 a year for childcare, the highest costs in Canada. Overall, Ontario funds its social programs at the lowest rate in the country.

The need to build a strong anti-poverty movement in Ontario has never been more pressing. If the provincial Liberals are to earn better grades, we will need to encourage them—with protests, rallies, organizing, activism, and effective advocacy.

Simon Black is an assistant professor at the Centre for Labour Studies, Brock University, and a member of Peel Poverty Action Group

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Peel Region

Labour Community Services of Peel

989 Derry Road East Suite 403 L5T 2J8

ELECTIONS PLAN

BY PAT McGRAIL

The Liberal government, backed by the NDP and Greens, promised to make 2015 the last “unfair election”.

In October, over nine million votes (51.8%) elected no-one. The Liberals received less than 40% of the popular vote but got 54% of the seats – and 100% of the power. We need to replace our current First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) voting system with a proportional voting system. Then, our votes will be equal and effective (i.e., “count”), so that our governments look like us and are accountable to us.

The NDP and Greens support a proportionally representative (PR) voting system. The Liberals remain open to alternatives. Legislation may be presented by early 2017, in time for a new voting system by 2019.

A proportional voting system will require MPs to collaborate across party lines. Party control will weaken. If a party receives 40% of the vote, it will get only 40% of the seats. Parties usually form majority coalitions. PR coalitions tend to be stable and enduring, focused on long-term planning.

We need a proportional voting system to get MPs working for us to tackle poverty, housing, unemployment, and more. Please call your Liberal MP to indicate that you support PR.

Pat McGrail chairs the Peel Action Team of Fair Vote Canada.

Art – the interactive way

When artist Leo Dias displayed some of his paintings at the Promenade Gallery in Lakeview, Mississauga, it was not just an art show, but “an interactive art installation” held in conjunction with guest speakers and performers.

Title of the interactive: “Branches from the Same Tree,” which Dias sees as redefining and affirming what it means to be Canadian and what can be considered collective Canadian values.

Dias says: “The intent of these art installation pieces is to create a fun way to develop dialogue amongst a broad spectrum of voices, be it First Nations, Inuit, Metis peoples, Canadians or newcomers.

“Participants can speak, write or draw their own truths on the Gallery walls, and build on common threads.”

Kevin Hunt and Natalia Norton of Night and Day Studios showed some of their collaborative paintings at Promenade;

Guest speakers included Louisette Lanteigne who is Mi’kmaq Metis Acadian. She outlined the history of various Treaties, current concerns over Enbridge’s reversing the flow of Line 9, how First Nations are in the forefront of fighting expansion of pipelines across Canada, and other challenges facing Canada’s indigenous peoples. She commented on achieving social justice, with quality of life and equity for all.

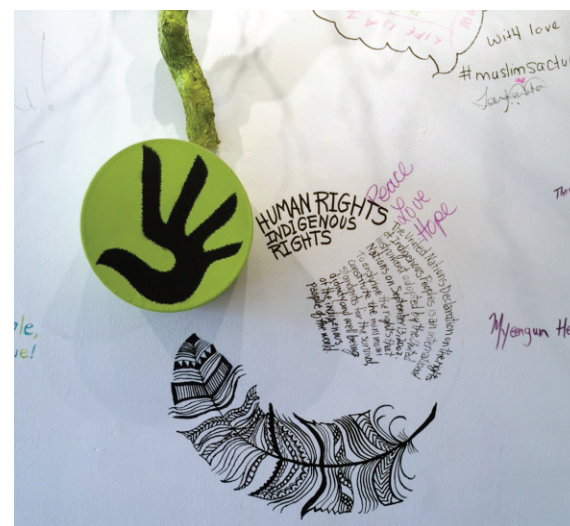
Farheen Khan, editor-in-chief of “It’s Muslims Actually” Campaign, described empowerment in the face of Islamophobia.

Cheryl Costello, writer, photographer and social advocate, talked about celebrating beauty as an act of protest.

Spoken Word performers Paul Edward and Kevin Zachary Serrick took part, as did Michelle Bilek, describing Peel Region’s first Diversity and Equity Charter, and Samantha Angel who addressed the need to counter urban sprawl.

Pat McGrail of Fair Vote Peel joined York University’s Dr. Dennis Pilon and Fair Vote director Gary Shaul talked about reforming federal elections, and the need for proportional representation.

Dias says the guest speaker plan shows that we are all branches of the same tree, a symbol of human experience, enabling us to connect better and live in peace.



Interactive art means visitors can add their own ideas, artistic or otherwise, to pictures on the gallery walls. Participants say interactivity shows we are all branches of the same tree. (Photo supplied)

Hepatitis C

Treatment, Care & Support Is Available

You can be at risk if:

- Sharing of personal care and hygiene items such as razors, toothbrushes, clippers and scissors with someone living with hepatitis C
- Sharing needles used for body tattoos and piercings. Re-using and sharing tattoo ink and ink pots
- Sharing drug equipment such as needles, filters, tourniquets, water, syringes, cookers, alcohol swabs, acidifiers
- Receive blood and body organs that have not been screened for hepatitis C. Even in Canada, if you received blood and organ donations before 1990 you may be at risk.
- Involved in medical procedures including immunization in hepatitis C endemic countries

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npdinfo@lao.on.ca



You can swear by it!

If you are an immigrant or new to Canada and need help with documents, a local Newcomers Information Centre (NIC) may be the place to look.

NIC has offices in Mississauga and Malton, and two in Brampton, plus it has 10 Commissioners of Oaths – qualified volunteers who are legally able to take affidavits, declarations, oaths, attesting to the validity of true copies of legal documents, and more.

The best part: The service is free. And the next best: You may be able to do your signing in a local library or other public building near you.



Surrounded by bookmarks, leaflets, and more, Ivan Li is a volunteer Commissioner of Oaths, providing a free service to immigrants and newcomers to Canada under the auspices of the Newcomer Information Centre. He's a newcomer himself, six years away from his birthplace in Hong Kong. (Tough Times photo)

Make an appointment by phoning NIC at 1 800 668-1179 ext. 1266, or in Peel you can phone Ivan Li at 416 524-3085.

If you are from the U.K and need to prove that you are still alive so as to continue receiving a British pension, Peel police used to sign the forms for you. Now they don't. Ivan is your man. Phone him.



It's midwinter, and at the GO bus station in downtown Toronto, somebody has been sleeping rough. Sleeping outdoors is visible in the big city, not so easy to see in Brampton and Mississauga. But homeless are here just the same. Peel plans a count of homeless people from June 4 to June 10 this year, part of the Alliance to End Homelessness, a national group that aims to find homes for 20,000 unhoused people across Canada. United Way of Peel is working with other organizations to find the Peel numbers, then publicize the facts and find housing for all of Peel's homeless within two years. Want to volunteer to help? Phone 905 602-3646 (Tough Times photo).



19

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PROTECTING AND ENHANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION



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Looking for a **SUMMER JOB?**

Each year the **Summer Job Challenge** provides youth with barriers to employment with an opportunity to gain valuable work experience throughout the summer in areas such as labour, administration and service delivery. Hired youth will work in entry-level positions for Region of Peel departments and local community agencies that provide services to residents.

Applicants must:

- Be between the ages of 16 and 24
- Be available to work full-time from July 4 to August 26, 2016
- Live in Brampton, Caledon or Mississauga

Rate of pay is \$11.25 per hour for 35 hours per week. No previous work experience is required. To be considered, applicants must fit the criteria and cannot have participated in a previous Summer Job Challenge or be related to a Region of Peel employee.

Interested youth can apply online at peelregion.ca/hr on **April 21 and 22**. Applications will be accepted for two days only.

To find out if you qualify, email SummerJobChallenge@peelregion.ca or call 905-791-7800, ext. 8799.

